

Protector

Siam Storm 4



The Final Adventure

Robert A. Webster

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Disclaimers; This fictional novel and the names of the characters portrayed herein, have no bearing to persons living or dead...Well, most of them.

No animals were killed during the writing of this novel. However, my Siamese fighting fish, Nobby, sadly passed away during Chapter Five and the scraggy hound that robbed and chewed one of my flip-flops, after a severe thrashing with my remaining flip flop, is now walking around with an arse like a blood orange, but it's not dead.

Prologue

He sinks his fang deep into her vein and the blood oozes over the back wall. “Grrr,” he said letting out an evil growl as the woman gurgled and...

“What are you doing buggerlugs?” asked Spock leaning over Stu’s shoulder and reading his computer screen.

Stu spun around and looking perturbed, asked. “How long have you been standing there?”

“Not long... Why, what are you doing?” asked Spock grinning.

Stu furrowed his brow. “If you must know, I’m writing a novel.”

Spock smirked, looked at the screen, chuckled, and asked. “Since when have you been able to write?”

Stu glared at him and sounding irritated said, “I am the one with CSE’s; Mr Peter... I didn’t-even-spell-my-name-right on the exam... Harris.”

“Yeah, a CSE grade 4 in pottery,” said Spock smirking.

Spock and Stu’s schooldays weren’t educational, with them both leaving school with no qualifications, and knowing making a clay ashtray wouldn’t get them into the NASA space rocket programme, they were useless.

“It was ceramics actually,” said Stu correcting him, “and I read a book about writing novels and showing emotions.”

Spock puckered his brow. “Well, that’s easy... just take a dump and photograph it,” he said looking bewildered.

Stu cocked his head to one side and looking confused, asked. “What?”

“Go dump and take a picture of it,” said Spock who shrugged, sighed and, said, “although I can’t see what that has to do with writing a book.”

Stu frowned until he figured out what the big lad prattled on about and said. “Emotion, dopey bollocks... not A Motion.”

***In Appendix.**

— Chapter One —

The year was 486 BC.

With clear blue skies, a cool breeze circulated through the rift valley near a small village on the outskirts of *Lubini, where hundreds of monks stood and paid homage to their dead prophet.

The thin white hessian cloth-wrapped body of Prince *Kshatriva Gautama, now known as *Siddhartha Gautama, lay on top of a wooden funeral pyre.

The disciple monks who made this pilgrimage wore kashaya saffron cassocks, and stood around the pyre chanting the *Four Noble Truths, taught to them by their enlightened prophet.

Unbeknownst to the gathered mourners, the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama would transcend this lifetime, with his words living in the souls and hearts of human beings for generations and beyond.

There was no pomp or ceremony for the dead Prince, having relinquished his royal position and wealth decades ago.

The funeral pyre was set up on the village outskirts in front of a mound with a small hole dug out that led to a small underground stupa in the mound to house the ashes of the Buddha.

The four monk disciples who brought Siddhartha's body from Luo Beach to his final resting place stood in front of the pyre with flaming wooden torches.

Standing alongside the monks was a middle-aged woman along with two young girls who looked out of place wearing white sarees. They remained silent as monks chanted mantras and once finished, the monks lit small clumps of tinder that ignited, and, as the flames flickered, the monks stood back.

Orange and yellow flames from the larger sticks of wood then ignited, lapping around Siddhartha's body.

As the flames intensified, the still air filled with white smoke and the crackling of burning timber. Scorched flesh filled their nostrils as the hessian slowly burned.

Another sound abruptly disturbed the mourners who looked around when they heard the thundering of chariots and men roaring from behind a hillock a short distance away.

The terrified mourners panicked as the sound drew closer and the first chariot appeared, followed by several others along with hordes of sword-wielding warriors.

The monks and Siddhartha's family looked terrified at one another as arrows flew towards them.

Panicking, they screamed as arrows struck several of the mourners as the chariots rumbled closer.

A monk shouted, "Quickly," and pointed to the nearby village. "Run to the village, we can find shelter there."

Although they all knew the villagers were defenceless against the hordes now descending upon them, they knew they stood more chance in the village where they could get Siddhartha's family to safety.

Terrified, three disciple monks shielded the woman and her daughters from the oncoming arrows as they ran to the village.

One monk said, "follow me," and led them inside his small homestead along with the two other monks.

The trembling villagers stood outside their stone and straw dwellings holding spears and slings. They all knew their crude homemade weapons were no match for the bronze swords wielded by the oncoming invaders.

They gave the first few monks that came any spare weapons as the remainder flooded into the small village picking up rocks on the way.

With fear etched across their faces, they crowded in the small village centre awaiting the war chariots.

While the woman and her daughters caught their breath, a monk went over to a large stiff resin and hemp woven cover on the floor as the chariots roared into the village.

The screams of villagers and monks being slaughtered outside drowned out the sound of the girls screaming as the monk lifted the panel to reveal a square pit.

The monk beckoned the family over and told them to go with his brothers.

With the terrified girl's hearts pounding, they, along with the two monks, jumped into the pit with a hole dug at the side.

The monk smiled and handed them down a cloth bag of food and gourds containing water. He smiled at the trembling woman. "Don't be afraid, you and your daughters go with my brother monks, they will take care of you," he said in a soothing voice, "you will be safe, and you must live."

The woman took the bags, smiled, and nodded.

One monk crawled into the hole at the side and said. "Follow me. It is dark so stay close."

The monk disappeared, and the woman crawled in behind him followed by her daughters with the other monk behind them.

They crawled along a small, hot, dark, claustrophobic tunnel, as the monk in the lead reassured them and reminded them to stay close.

Remaining topside and seeing them all leave, the monk replaced the cover and scattered dried earth over the hemp to disguise the narrow tunnel entrance pit.

The monk shuddered, picked up a wooden torch and, dipping the cloth wick into the embers of a cooking fire, he stretched up and lit the low straw roof of the dwelling.

Looking concerned, the monk glanced at the covered pit. He hoped that when the ceiling collapsed, the smoke from the fire would not permeate into the tunnel before the family and his brothers were far enough away to escape.

He and his brother monks had dug this tunnel long ago for just such an event. Knowing the tunnel came out between mounds of rocks where they could hide until it was safe, he smiled.

'Once it is safe, my brothers can take the Buddha's family to Lubini. Although it's a three day walk, they have better defences there,' he thought and looked up.

Seeing the roof now ablaze, he took a large stone mortar from a pestle, went to the doorway, and peered outside. He felt enraged when he saw the dead or dying piled up and lying in pools of blood with severed heads and torso's strewn around the arid muddy red street.

Although he saw the few remaining monks and villagers still fighting, the monk knew this would be futile against the larger stronger adversary who cut them down like animals.

The monk saw several invaders setting fire to the other dwellings roofs. He frowned and hoped his ploy would work and make them believe that they had already searched and destroyed his home.

Smoke now filled his small dwelling and billowed out around him as he stood in the doorway. He coughed and looked in the distance to where Siddhartha's body should be ablaze.

His eyes widened and he stood with his mouth agape when he saw Siddhartha's smouldering corpse loaded onto a large wooden chariot.

Feeling helpless and terrified, but trembling with rage, he held up his primitive stone pestle, snarled, yelled, and charged outside.

— Chapter Two —

Stu frowned, turned off his computer screen, and looked at Spock.

“What do you want? And why are you sneaking around my house?” he asked.

“I wasn’t sneaking, but as usual you left your door wide open. You can’t blame me because you are too tight-fisted to put on the air-conditioner. You must have been too engrossed in your epic novel to hear me come in,” said Spock and sniggered.

Stu, feeling perturbed, saw Spock wearing his daft fishing hat, and said. “I thought you were going fishing.”

Spock nodded. “Yes, I was going fishing, but Shithead called me and said that your phone’s switched off and he has been trying to get hold of you.”

Stu furrowed his brow. “Oh, is he okay? What does he want?”

Spock shrugged. “I don’t know, but he sounded anxious and said it was urgent that he spoke with us both.” He rubbed his chin and said. “I told him that I would come here and then call him back.”

“Oh, okay,” said Stu, walking to the coffee table to get his phone.

He turned it on and called Pon.

“Huh,” said Stu, number busy. He tapped his lips together. “Okay, I will make us a mug of tea and then call him.”

“Good idea matey,” said Spock as Stu walked into the kitchen.

Spock smirked, turned on the computer screen, and read what little Stu had written of his book.

Spock shrugged and shouted. “What’s it about?”

Stu grumbled, walked back into the living room, turned off the screen, and said. “If you must know, it is about a one-toothed vampire.”

Spock looked gobsmacked before bursting out laughing.

Stu, unimpressed by his friend’s disbelief in his literary prowess, stormed back into the kitchen grumbling.

Spock, with a titter in his voice, called out. “What are you calling it...Gums or Woneater?” he sniggered and said. “Watch out Bram Stoker... here comes Wilson.”

Stu mumbled as he heard Spock’s condescending laughter before the kettle clicked off.

“Very funny,” said Stu, walking back into the living room with two mugs of tea and placed them on the coffee table.

He sat on the sofa and said. “Stop taking the piss and come here while I call Pon.”

Still tittering, Spock sat next to Stu while he called Pon again.

“Ah, it’s ringing now,” he said, and put his phone on speaker when Pon answered.

“Hi mate what’s up?” asked Stu.

“Hi Stu, is Spock with you?” said Pon sounding concerned.

“Yes matey, I’m sitting here with Agatha Wilson,” said Spock chuckling.

“My friends, I have a problem, and I need your help,” said Pon sounding wistful.

“Why, did you trap your tail in the door again?” asked Spock and tittered.

“Or did Kim think it was a hairy snake and chop it off by mistake?” said Stu chortling.

With the sound of his two English friends laughing, Pon tutted, ignored their attempts at wit, and sounding serious, said. “I can’t explain over the phone, but can you come to the Imperial Palace?”

The lads stopped joking, and while Stu took a slurp of his tea, Spock said. “Do we need to bring anything with us, a change of clothes or toothbrushes?” Then, fishing for clues, asked, “Should I bring my Adventure hat?”

Pon, not wanting to divulge information over the phone, said, “If you get here tomorrow morning, I can explain everything when I see you. You will need to stay for a few nights.”

“Oh, okay,” said Spock and looked at Stu who shrugged, nodded, and said. “Okay, we will leave here first thing and should be there around 10:00 am.”

“Thank you my friends. Oh, and Spock you better bring your Adventure hat,” said Pon and chuckled.

Stu groaned and then the pair looked at each other as Pon said. “Come straight to my quarters. You can bring the girls if you want, it will be great to see you all.”

“Okay Shithead, we’ll see you tomorrow,” said Stu, and after hanging up the phone, asked Spock, “what do you think mate, he sounded worried?”

Spock giggled and said. “He’s winding us up matey. He just wanted a night on the piss, that’s why he said to bring the girls, so he can fob Kim off with them.”

Stu rubbed his chin and looked puzzled. “I don’t think so Spock, they only came here a few weeks ago, and we went out then.”

Spock smirked. “Yep, but he got a bollocking from Kim for being out late.”

Stu chortled. “Yeah, and so did you.”

Spock took a drink of tea, recalling the major bollocking he received from Moo after coming home spannered with a tattoo. He frowned as he looked at his arm and picked dead skin off his recent tattoo. “Bastard,” he mumbled, “hurry up and heal.”

Stu sighed and said. “Well, we won’t find out anything until tomorrow and now you aren’t going fishing, shall we go for an afternoon libation?” He took a slurp of tea and said. “We can pop to the Butterfly bar, have a couple of beers, and get our todgers fondled. We can come home early, get the girls to pack, and then have an early night. Then we can leave in the morning and go see what Pon wanted.”

Spock pondered for a split second, smiled, nodded, and said, “Good idea matey.”

The pair walked outside into the hot afternoon sun and got into Stu’s Hilux, feeling excited about their plans for the afternoon and intrigued by Pon’s phone call.

“Take off that stupid hat,” said Stu, “you know what happened the last time you went to the Butterfly Bar wearing it.”

Spock grunted and took off his hat.

The memory of how his headpiece got swiped while he was having a quick shag went through his mind. He felt sure he left his hat on the bar, but when he returned from the short time rooms, his hat was nowhere in sight.

With everyone at the bar insisting they hadn’t seen it, Spock looked like Sherlock Holmes as he walked around the bar looking for his hat amongst the bins, shelves, and around the bench seats in the bar.

As he and the girls in the Butterfly Bar searched outside, Stu sat at the bar sniggering.

Spock found his lucky fishing hat floating in the hot tub set up in a dark recess in an area outside the bar.

Customers paid the bar to have the girls service them in the warm frothy water, and it’s commonly known as Pattaya’s Infamous Butterfly Bar Aqua Shag Pool.

Spock grimaced as he remembered his disgust at having to remove his treasured hat from the tub. Water and sticky blobs of gizm that floated on the water dripped from his soaked bonnet, with some sticking.

While putting his fishing hat in the glove box, Spock glanced at Stu smirking. He frowned and still felt convinced that he had something to do with it, despite his denials. However, Spock wasn't concerned at the time, as it seemed to have cheered his old mate up during his dark depressive period not so long ago.

Several minutes later, Spock saw Stu smiling while driving, and realising he was now thinking about his stupid book, said. "Oh, and by the way Hemmingway. Growel is spelt G-R-O-W-L. Blood spurted, not oozes from a vein, and I'm certain it's sank, not sinks."

— Chapter Three —

The following morning, Stu drove along highway 3 toward Bangkok and the Imperial Palace.

Spock and Stu took the girls with them to give them a few days break from their market stall. Dao and Moo could gossip with Kim while the lads found out what Pon wanted.

“I hope that bloody box hasn’t been stolen again,” said Stu furrowing his brow.

Spock nodded. “Me too; mind you it is a fake, so I wouldn’t think they’d mind too much if it was. But what else could it be to make Shithead sound so anxious.”

Stu shrugged and wondered what was so urgent.

During the two-hour journey, there wasn’t a lot said in the Hilux. Stu thought about his book while Dao thought about what to buy him for his upcoming birthday.

Spock smirked as he looked out of the window. He thought about his new tattoo and what additions to add to his dragon when he got it; and Moo wondered whether it was legal in Thailand to get a dopey foreign husband gelded.

Stu and Dao’s relationship was still uncertain after her indiscretion with Welsh John almost a year ago.

Stu felt empty after he booted Dao out of their home. She’d phone him many times but he ignored her, as he couldn’t get his mind off her lies and deceit.

Trying to drown his sorrows, he went on drinking and shagging binges alone that lasted days at a time. However, the short-time sex and being constantly drunk depressed him more.

Stu felt he would never feel the happiness that he felt with Dao, and going with other girls only made him realise how much he loved her.

Spock saw little of Stu over the following weeks because he’d snuck out and stayed out, and he and Moo felt concerned.

Spock saw Stu at his window one afternoon looking bleary eyed, so he went to Stu’s back door, which he’d left open when he came home at 4am. He went into Stu’s living room, which looked and smelt like a rowdy pub at closing time.

Stu sat on the sofa in his shorts with his face resembling an old bloodhound.

“I’ll make us a cuppa,” said Spock, picking empty beer cans off the floor.

“Not for me mate,” said Stu holding up a can of beer in his shaking hand.

Spock sat on the sofa and looked at his old friend. “Matey, you need to snap out of this,” he said, “time is something you never get back. You must either find someone new or make it up with Dao.”

Stu shrugged and took a slurp of beer.

“Moo told me that Dao talked about you every day at the shop and cried all the time,” said Spock looking into Stu’s bloodshot eyes.

“Yeah, whatever,” said Stu sounding nonchalant.

“Pon and Kim are coming in a few days, so how about we all go out for a meal?” said Spock smiling.

“Yeah, maybe,” said Stu putting down his can of Singha beer and picking up a glass of Mekong whisky, which he sculled and said. “I’m going to Soi 6... coming?”

Spock sighed, looked at his watch, and then at his depressed looking friend and shook his head. “No, matey,” he said, “not today.”

Stu sat in the King Kong bar pondering and knew what Spock said made sense. He wanted Dao back, unable to get her out of his thoughts. She was the first thing he thought when he sobered up, which is why he got drunk again.

“You not come yet?” asked the woman wiping her mouth and going down to try again.

Stu looked around the dingy, short time bar, his usual kicking-off point before a night on the razz. He felt the warm feeling in his loins as one of his regular short timers tried desperately to finish.

‘He doesn’t normally take this long,’ she thought as she sucked and manipulated Stu’s todger.

Stu moved the girl’s head off his flacid old soldier.

The girls looked up and asked. “What’s wrong darling?”

“Nothing,” said Stu and smiled at the girl. He gave her 1000 Baht, finished his beer, and went home.

Stu spent the next day cleaning his house and went out for a few beers with Spock at a nearby bar.

The Heads came the next day and that evening they all went to the all- you-can-eat seafood buffet, where Spock as usual demolished plate after plate of juicy prawns.

Although Dao came along, the others felt a nervous tension between her and Stu, with neither speaking nor looking at each other.

Stu felt angry and Dao did not want to say anything in case she upset him. She had seen a nasty streak to her normally cool, jovial husband when he kicked her out.

Spock saw Stu quickly finishing his first beer and ordering another. ‘Well this isn’t going as planned,’ he thought as he could see anger now in Stu’s eyes as he glared at Dao.

Spock sighed and popping another prawn in his mouth, tried to think of something to say to break the tension that now lingered at the table.

Pon’s words finally did the trick. Well, his words, along with Spock and Moo’s intervention.

Pon leant across the table and said. “Remember Stu. To understand everything is to forgive everything. The way is not in the sky, the way is in the heart.”

Spock smirked, wiggled a juicy peeled prawn, and said. “Or in the stomach... Ouch!”

“Stop insulting Buddha, stupid Farang, foreigner,” said Moo tugging and twisting Spock’s ear.

Stu smiled. ‘This is how it used to be’ he thought, feeling tears welling up in his eyes. ‘I have missed this.’

He looked at Dao and saw the hurt and remorse on her face and he smiled at her.

Dao, with tears in her eyes, said. “I am sorry my husband. I love you more than anything, please forgive me.”

Stu leant over and wiping a tear away from his wife’s sad brown eyes, said, “I love you too.”

Cheers erupted from Spock, Moo, Kim, and Pon.

“Wisdom and humour, never fails,” said Spock smirking before getting his ear twisted again by Moo.

Stu smiled, moved his glass of beer away, and filled a glass with water from the glass jug on the table.

“I won’t drink too much; it looks like we will have a busy night,” he said smirking at Dao.

Dao smiled and whispered in his ear, “Stop off and buy some Listerine mouthwash on the way home.”

Stu smirked, stood up, took out his wallet, and said, “Right, time to go.”

He smiled at Dao, waved at a waitress, and shouted, "Check bin khap," the bill please.

Although the couple were now back together, Stu could not forget how Dao hurt him and hoped they could work through their problems and stay together. His feelings for Dao had changed and although he would do anything for her, he no longer trusted her, and wasn't sure whether he still loved her.

Dao felt happy and didn't realise that she had done anything wrong. She now understood that the Thai attitude and the Western attitude towards sex was different, and she wanted to be a loving, devoted wife.

Things between Spock and Moo were also on shaky ground as usual. This time Spock was in the doghouse after he and Stu came home one night spannered, and Spock showed an infuriated Moo his new tattoo.

Spock and Stu had gone to Soi 2 for a few beers. However, after listening to a good band in one bar, the pair stayed and got spannered.

Spock kept looking at the small glass-fronted unit behind the bar. He had seen several people going in and out of the shop for several hours. The people coming out of the shop had Thai girls clinging to their arms with beaming smiles.

Stu looked at his watch with a Popeye squint. "Nearly one o'clock," he slurred, "the bands almost finished, so I suppose we better go home."

Spock belched, looked at Stu, then back over at the now empty shop, and pointed. "Not yet matey, I'm going to get a tattoo."

Stu looked over at the tattoo shop and puckered his brow, "You're doing what?" he asked.

"I'm getting a tattoo," said Spock who belched, got off the bar stool, and staggered toward the tattooist.

Stu laughed and said. "Moo will kill you."

Spock turned, looked at his mate, furrowed his brow, and slurred. "I wear the trousers in my house."

Stu sniggered. "Yeah, when Moo lets you... Anyway, what are you having done? A heart with Spock loves Moo."

"Nope, but it'll be tasteful," said Spock grinning and staggered to the shop with Stu following.

Spock smirked as he sat in the tattooist chair and the Thai asked him what he wanted.

"Right Picasso matey," said Spock showing him the back of his forearm and pointing. "I want Thai writing going down here saying: It won't suck itself."

Stu cringed as the smiling tattooist picked up his buzzing needle, as Spock chuntered at him to make sure it looked good.

The Thai tattooist, although used to drunken foreigners, found Spock annoying, especially when he kept calling him Picasso matey and wouldn't stop whinging about how good he wanted it to look and impress the ladies. Spock glared at the tattooist every time he touched his skin and asked for a different colour.

The tattooist thought Spock and Stu were tourists, unaware Spock lived in Pattaya with his stropky Thai wife, so with Spock pissing him off, he tattooed in Thai: 'Up your bum, no harm done,' which he knew would attract the lady... boy's.

He knew the girls at the bars would say nothing and just smile because it was something he had done many times with annoying tourists.

"Does that look okay?" asked the tattooists when finished and Spock inspected the Thai writing.

"Hmm," he said slurring nonchalant "It looked crooked, but I suppose it will do."

"Don't worry, it will look better when it's healed," said the tattooist smirking and wanting them to leave

so he could close and go for a beer.

“You stupid man,” said Moo clipping a smiling Spock around his head. “You like ladyboy?”

Spock then looked puzzled at the writing while Moo translated.

The following day, Stu chuckled as he drove an angry Spock to the tattooist and threatened to rearrange his face.

The terrified Thai told him that when the scabs came off, he would cover it up with a colourful dragon, free. Looking nervous, he showed the enraged Spock a picture of a majestic colourful dragon.

Spock looked at the picture and smiled, imagining how good it would look curling around his forearm. He calmed down and let the man off with just an ear clipping.

Still grumbling on the way home about having to wait for the scabs to fall off, Stu chuckled as Spock told him.

“I need a beer matey to get over the shock, but don’t drive near any ladyboy bars.”

Stu smirked and said. “I don’t think you can call them ladyboys nowadays Spock, they are now called transsexuals.”

Spock looked at Stu smirking and said. “Matey, there’s a difference between a transsexual and a ladyboy.”

Stu furrowed his brow as he drove and said. “Oh yes, and what that might be?”

“Well,” said Spock sounding wistful. “Transsexuals are sometimes girls who have had the strap-a-dick-to-me operation.”

Stu frowned and looked confused as Spock chuckled and said. “And the others are fucking ladyboys.”

Moo felt livid when she saw Spock later, knowing if her friends saw the tattoo before it was covered, they would think her husband was a poofta. She didn’t believe Spock’s story at first because Stu wound her up and told her Spock said he would no longer call her Goyt head, but Albert.

They arrived at the Imperial Palace in Bangkok, went through security, and drove to the Prime Master’s large accommodation area.

Dao and Moo went to see Kim and Samnan while the lads went to Pon’s large study/office.

Pon sat behind a large shiny teak desk and smiled. “Thank you for coming,” he said, then stood and waited them.

Spock and Stu smiled, went over, and gave him a double ear clipping.

Pon laughed, and they all sat.

“You mystical old dog, you sounded elusive on the phone, so why do you need to see us so urgently?” asked Stu smirking.

Pon looked at Spock’s forearm, furrowed his brow as he read his tattoo, and grinned.

“Don’t ask,” said Spock noticing Pon staring.

“Brought us here for a piss up have you?” asked Stu rubbing his hands together.

Pon sighed and shook his head. “No Stu, something is happening that is devastating the Buddhist world,” he said and looked concerned.

“What’s wrong?” asked Stu, concerned by their friend’s sullen demeanour.

A Thai woman brought in two hot mugs of coffee and put a mug in front of Spock and Stu, wai-ed the Prime Master, and left the room.

Pon waited for her to leave and leant forward. “It is difficult to explain,” said Pon, knowing his English friends were as thick as pig shit.

Stu took a slurp of coffee and said, “Well try. It can’t be that difficult.”

“Yeah, he has a CSE in ceramics, and he’s an author, so he will understand,” said Spock smirking and pointing at Stu.

Pon took a deep breath as the pair leant forward in anticipation of his story.

“What is happening now dated back to events that happened over 2,500 years ago.”

Spock and Stu looked intrigued and surprised, as they were unaware that anything untoward was happening in the world, as Pon told them. “You must understand that the wisdom of Buddha was not written down until hundreds of years after his death. The details about his life are known to only a few people and are sketchy.”

Spock chortled and after taking a slurp of coffee, said. “Sketchy, oh that’s profound.”

Pon smiled and said. “Buddha’s mortal life was not as important as his immortal words.”

“Get on with it,” said Stu, taking another drink from his mug.

Pon sighed, looked at Spock and Stu, cleared his throat, and told them.

“Before the Buddha found enlightenment and became known as Siddhartha, which in the Pali language meant, ‘he who has found meaning,’ he was *Prince Kshatriva Gautama. His family ruled the Sakya clan, who were fearsome warriors in the Mongolian empire. However, before Kshatriva gave up his Royal position and wealth to follow his calling, he was married with a son. His son Rahula, before following his father on the path to enlightenment, was married with two daughters.”

“I never read about that,” said Stu interrupting after he remembered reading snippets about Buddha while studying for a pub quiz.

“No, you won’t have. Very few people know what I have told you; it has been kept secret within certain monastic Buddhist societies known as the Sanctuaries. The Tinju being one of many around the world.”

Spock furrowed his brow and looked puzzled. “What does monastic mean?” he asked.

Pon smiled, and ignoring the question, told them. **“Rahula died before his father, but his wife Achal and his daughters, Madhu, and Sabita, survived. The writings said that King Ajasatru, the then ruler of the Sakya clan, sent his army to attack the village where the Buddha’s cremation was being held to kill Achal, Madhu, and Sabita and take the Buddha’s body before it was burned.”*

Spock and Stu looked puzzled. “Why?” asked Stu. “I can’t see a singed corpse being much use.”

“As I already told you, the Buddha was a Prince,” said Pon.

“Yeah, but you said he gave that up,” said Spock looking confused.

“Yes, but King Ajasatru was only the caretaker ruler of the clan, because when the Buddha’s father, King Suddhodana died, neither Siddhartha nor his son Rahula had any interest in becoming Kings.

However, once Siddhartha died, because the Gautama family were still ordained rulers, Achal, the Buddha’s daughter, and Madhu, and Sabita, his granddaughters, by rights were the true rulers.

Because King Ajasatru and his family had built up the powerful clan, he was unwilling to hand that power over and wanted all trace of the Gautama’s eradicated. He not only wanted to keep control of the clan, but wanted the Buddha’s body to secure his reign.”

Spock and Stu looked confused and not having the benefit of the Appendix at the back of this book, looked at one another and shrugged.

“Yeah, that’s all very interesting, but all that happened years ago,” said Stu looking bemused.

Spock smirked. “Huh, and I think it is safe to say that they are all dead now.”

Pon entwined his fingers and told them.

“From what the stories told us, Buddha had always feared that King Ajasatru would try to murder his daughter-in-law and granddaughters, so he assigned some of his followers as Gopetu, Protectors. As some of his followers came from warrior clans, he chose them to protect the family. The later scriptures said that when King Ajasatru’s army attacked the village, two Protectors escaped, along with Achal and her daughters. However, King Ajasatru’s army took Buddha’s body, which his son later had cremated and sold the ashes and remains to eight princes of countries around Asia, giving the Sakya clan more wealth and power.”

“Yeah, but they are only stories like in the Christian bible. How do you know it’s fact?” asked Stu, enthralled by the tale.

“Because mortal remains of the holy ones are scattered around the globe,” said Pon who looked at Spock and Stu and grinned. “You know we have some of his teeth, as does Sri Lanka.”

Spock and Stu looked at each other and groaned.

“Yeah, and what a bloody nuisance they’ve been,” said Spock frowning.

Pon smirked and said. “There are also bones in Korea as well as Sku...”

“Okay, so what happened to the girls?” said Stu interrupting, wanting to change the subject.

“They lived in anonymity for the rest of their lives. Madhu and Sabita married and had families, who in turn had families, and so on and so forth throughout the ages. The Gopetu’s would do the same and stay with the families to watch over and protect them throughout the generations,” said Pon, cutting to the chase, as he knew Spock and Stu had the attention spans of gnats.

“The old Gopetu story sounds like a load of old bollox,” said Spock who looked at Stu and smirked. “Hey matey, why don’t you write that into your book? Woneater meets the Gopetu.” Spock chuckled at his scathing wit, until Stu raised an eyebrow, giving him the pre-bollocking glare.

“Okay,” said Stu, looking at Pon. “So, what’s all this got to do with today?”

Pon looked at his confused friends.

“I know you are sceptical and confused my friends, but the descendants of our lord Buddha are real and live in modern society with their protectors.”

Stu tried to work out how many families of the Buddha could be out there. Although useless at maths, he thought that with the Buddha dying over 2500 years ago and rounding up to the nearest decimal point, he figured that there could be lots. “So how many Buddha’s kids and their Guppy’s are out there?”

Pon smirked, “Gopetu,” he said correcting him.

He then stood and said. “Please come with me, my friends.”

The lads shrugged and went with Pon to the lounge where a small Asian boy with a shaven head, dressed in saffron robes, sat in the lotus position watching television.

The boy, engrossed in the cartoons, didn’t move and gazed at the television.

Wondering why there was no sound coming from the TV, Stu saw the boy wearing headphones, and Pon said. “He was brought here by his Gopetu several days ago after his family were murdered in England.”

Spock and Stu gasped. “England,” said Stu furrowing his brow. “What were they doing in England?”

Pon looked at Spock and Stu looking puzzled and said, “They’re English, and they live there.”

“Oh,” said Stu, looking concerned. “So what happened to his family and where is his Guppy?”

Pon looked at Stu, shook his head, sighed, and said, “His Gopetu brought him here, but how, and what happened I am not sure. His Protector collapsed shortly after arriving. Fortunately, Master Vitthae was here and recognised the symptoms of the slow acting Aroona root poison. The Gopetu is now in the Imperial Palace’s clinic. Master Vitthae and other Tinju are taking care of him, but he has not regained consciousness yet.” Pon pointed to the boy, “although he and his Gopetu speak Thai, they are difficult to understand because it is some kind of English dialect. Maybe you know what it is so we can understand them?”

Stu and Spock shrugged and looked at the back of the boy.

“His name is Siddhartha,” said Pon sounding sullen.

“It’s the Golden Child,” Spock whispered to Stu.

“Don’t be daft, that’s just a movie,” said Stu, although also thought the boy must have special powers because from behind he looked the spitting image of the boy in the film.

“I bet he levitates, turns around, and plays mind games with us, and I bet he has super strength,” said Spock looking alarmed.

“Maybe,” said Stu also looking worried.

Pon, not understanding what his barmy friends were babbling about, took the pair over to the young boy.

The boy, detecting someone’s presence, removed his headphones and span around.

“Hello Siddhartha. These are my friends from England who I told you about,” said Pon smiling down at the boy. “This is Spock and Stu.”

Spock, relieved at not seeing the boy levitate or shoot lightning bolts from his eyes, said, “Hello Siddhartha, I’m Spock, it’s nice to meet you.”

Stu smiled. “And I’m Stu, Siddhartha,” he said although unsure whether the lad understood what he was saying.

Stu, Spock, and Pon saw anguish and confusion in the boy’s eyes as he looked at Spock and Stu and said. “Ay-yup lads, call me Sid.”

Spock and Stu jumped back, and Spock, with his eyes wide and mouth agog said. “You’re a Yorkie? It’s no wonder the Thais’ don’t understand you.”

Sid smiled but his voice quivered as he said. “Aye, born and bred in Sheffield.”

Although heartbroken, Sid felt relieved when he heard Spock and Stu’s northern twang.

Sid looked at Spock and Stu. “Where’s Dave?”

Spock and Stu looked at Pon. “Who’s Dave?”

“His Protector,” said Pon, now realising Sid spoke English and speaking slower, said. “Siddhartha, Dave will be okay, and you are safe so don’t worry.”

The little boy wiped away his tears.

Spock, seeing the boy looking upset, broke the tension and asked, “What does Dave mean, Sid?”

Stu looked at Spock and said. “That’s a dumb question Spock.”

Spock, looking indignant, looked at Stu and furrowed his brow. “Why? According to what Pon told us in that funny language, ‘Siddhartha’ means ‘he who has found meaning,’ and it’s Sid for short. Dave is a ‘Gopetu,’ meaning ‘Protector,’ so Dave must have some meaning and be short for something,” said Spock and chuckled. “Maybe it’s ancient for a kicker of arses.”

“I suppose so,” said Stu sounding wistful. “Maybe Dave is short for divine something... Devine kicker of arses.”

Spock nodded. "Or, divine, Yorkie, kicker of arses," he said.

Stu furrowed his brow and sounding condescending said. "Don't be daft Spock; Yorkie's didn't exist in Buddha's day."

Pon saw Sid smiling while listening to the pair and realised that he had made the perfect choice to look after Sid until he solved this riddle.

"Huh, smartarse," said Spock ignoring Stu. He looked down at Sid and asked, "So what does Dave mean?"

Sid chuckled and saw the pair looked captivated while waiting for an answer.

He shrugged and said. "I dorn know what it means, but it's short for David."

The dopey pair looked at each other, and then at Sid who now looked sullen as tears welled up in his eyes.

"Don't worry little matey, we'll look after you." said Spock feeling upset.

Sid stood and Spock crouched and hugged the tearful lad.

A Thai woman brought in a coke for Sid, along with cans of Singha beer for the lads.

While Pon sat on an armchair, Sid sat on the sofa between Stu and Spock, held their hands, and said. "I don't rightly know what 'appened. I was watching the footie wi' me Dad, when our dog Whippet started barking and growling at nowt. Me Mam looked worried and while me Dad called Dave; she dragged me upstairs and pulled down the steps to our attic. She told me to keep me gob shut and hide. I did as she told me and she pushed me up 't' steps and I heard loads of banging and crashing and Whippet going crazy. I stayed there fer a while befar me Mam pulled the steps darn and told me to come down."

Upset and confused, Sid took a drink of coke, before telling them. "Me Mam took me downstairs. The living room looked like we'd been burgled. Everything wez trashed. Dad sat on the settee looking reet poorly and told me I had tah go with Dave. Me Mam came in with me school backpack, she looked terrible too, and collapsed on 't' chair with blood all over the place, and no sign of Whippet." Sid wiped tears from his eyes and said. "I cried, but me Dad said I had to go wey Dave."

Sid went quiet and stared at his glass of coke while he recalled the events and said. "Dave took me to Manchester airport and we waited hours fer a flight to Thailand." Sid, unable to hold back the hurt, put his head in his hands and cried.

Spock's maternal instinct kicked in and he smiled at the lad and offered him a cigarette.

With tears streaming down his little face, Sid looked at Spock smiling with his cigarette packet opened and Stu glowering at him with one eyebrow raised. Sid shook his head and with his voice quivering, said. "No, I don't smoke, I'm only nine."

Sid then sniffed back the tears, and trembling, said. "Dave looked reet poorly on t' plane. He brought me here two days ago and I haven't seen him since. They put me in these daft clothes, shaved me 'ead, and stuffed me in a temple with other kids dressed t' same. It was a long journey, and I thought I wey being kidnapped." Sid juddered. "I dornt know what's happening and I'm scared."

He pointed to Pon and told Spock and Stu. "Pon's a nice bloke. He brought me here this morning, let me watch telly, and said you were coming to help."

"We will Sid," said Stu and smiled.

Sid smiled at Spock and Stu and sounding hopeful said. "Now you two are 'ere, maybe tonight I'll get t' sleep in a proper bed, before I go home tomorrow to see me Mam and Dad."

Spock and Stu felt compassion for this little confused, scared boy, but unable to find words of comfort, Spock gave him his can of beer. Stu again raised an eyebrow as Sid gulped down the Singha beer and grimaced.

“Would you mind if Sid stayed with you tonight?” Pon asked smiling and looking relieved.

Sid smiled at the pair who now saw relief in the boy’s face.

“Good idea,” said Spock, putting his large arm around Sid’s shoulder, and smiled.

“Yeah, that’ll be okay, but no more beer,” said Stu, with his eyebrow still raised.

“You can sleep in Stu and Dao’s bed, nothing else happened in there.” Spock chuckled.

Stu is about to retort when Sid looked at Spock’s forearm and said, “That looks like a new tattoo, it’s still scabby. What does it say?”

Spock looked at the smiling Sid, and as he fumbled for words, Stu tittered and said, “Get out of that one then, buster.”

While Pon went to investigate further, Spock and Stu stayed with Sid in the lounge trying to take his mind off what had happened. Although they felt awkward, as they knew Sid hadn’t yet realised that his parents were dead, they talked and watched television.

Dao, Moo, Kim and Samnan came in at lunchtime, met Sid, and they all went to the large dining room and ate with Pon.

They spent the day with Sid either indoors or in the small playground on the lawn Pon had made for Samnan. The two kids had a whale of a time on the slides, rubber tyre swings, and see-saw. So did Samnan and Sid, but felt happy when Moo came and led Spock off the playground by his lug, with Stu following them looking sheepish.

Pon had a small bed brought into Stu and Dao’s bedroom for Sid along with his belongings, and he and Dao went to sleep at 8pm. Stu felt happy because it would give Dao time with Sid who was of similar age to her own son, and it made Sid feel safe.

Moo told Spock she was tired and went to bed early and watched television in their bedroom until she nodded off.

While Sid and the girls slept, Spock and Stu went into the kitchen. The palace staff, knowing from their previous visits, had stocked the fridge with cans of Singha beer.

Stu and Spock took two cans over to the table where they sat and discussed the day’s events.

“None of this makes sense,” said Stu. “Why now, and why has there been nothing on television about the murders if it is happening worldwide?”

Spock shrugged, and the pair spent the next few hours deliberating and trying to figure out what they could do about the situation. With the beer stocks almost gone, Spock became philosophical and said. “I can’t get my head around this religion nonsense.” He took a slurp of Singha beer and continued. “They all believe in one god, but according to all the bibles, he told them something different. According to the Muzzies, when they die, they get seven virgins to meet them. Well, that doesn’t make any sense; what do the virgins think about that, don’t women have a say?”

Stu, although listening, thought about his novel and how the hero, the one-toothed vampire, would overcome his nemesis, the dreaded Angel of Guppy.

Spock looked at Stu, slurped the last dreg from the can, and said. “As for our lot, the Christians’; that bloke Moses reckoned God spoke to him and told him to kill his son, and then a goat... Why?” Spock slurred. “Don’t goats have a say?”

Stu shrugged, so Spock continued. “If all these religious idiots spent as much time caring for the planet instead of what they thought created it, the world would be a far better place.”

He squashed his can and threw it at the full waste bin. It bounced off the other cans and landed on the floor.

Spock stood and said. "I think if there is a God, he should make an appearance and put the records straight."

He looked at Stu and grinned. "What do you think matey, guest appearance on the Oprah Winfrey show... God live, with his mate Buddha." Spock chuckled.

"I don't think Buddha taught us what happened when you die mate. I think he only taught people how to live properly," said Stu, putting in his two-penneth before Plato Harris went to get his toga.

Spock went over, picked up the can, and put it in the waste bin, which again fell out. He shrugged and then went to the fridge, took out the last two cans, tutted, and handed one to Stu.

Spock took a long gulp, belched and said. "That's a load of old bollox; we know how to live properly." He took another gulp, belched again, smiled, and raised his can. "Cheers matey, this is the life."

The following morning, the two wise philosophers, looking worse for wear, went into the kitchen where an angry Moo pointed to the stack of empty Singha cans in and around the bin. Sid, now dressed in jeans and a t-shirt, chuckled as Moo bollocked a hung over Spock and Stu.

Pon and Kim interrupted their bollocking when they came into the kitchen with Samnan.

While Moo and Kim cooked Thai food for her, Dao, Pon, Kim, and Samnan, Dao rustled up three full English breakfasts for Spock, Stu, and Sid.

They finished breakfast and with Moo still glaring at Spock; he, Stu, Pon, and Sid went into the living room where Pon took something from a bag and handed it to Sid.

Sid's face lit up. "Wow, a Gameboy, thanks Pon," he said, turned it on, and went to sit on an armchair.

Spock had a quick shufty in Pon's bag but looked disappointed after seeing no more Gameboys.

Noticing Sid engrossed with the Gameboy, they sat around a coffee table.

"So what's happening?" whispered Stu.

Pon sounded anxious when he leant forward and said.

"This could be far more serious than I first thought. I don't know how widespread it is yet, but there are several hundred of the Buddha's descendants in Thailand. They all know that if something were to happen to a descendant or a Gopetu, they would contact their Sanctuary, but none have contacted the Tinju. They know I am here, and they also know the location of the Wat in Salaburi."

Stu rubbed his chin. "Hmm, maybe it's just a coincidence." He leant over and whispered. "Perhaps Sid's family were burgled and killed for their valuables, Sheffield is a rough place."

Pon looked sullen, shook his head, and said. "No, there are too many coincidences." He looked at Sid playing and then at Spock and Stu. "I will show you what I mean later and then you will understand."

Stu looked puzzled. "So who do you think killed them? And why now?"

Pon's telephone ringing interrupted him from answering Stu's question. He looked at the number and answered.

Sid, hearing Pons phone ringing, stopped playing his Gameboy and looked at the three. Spock and Stu smiled at him while Pon finished his conversation. Then he looked at Sid and said. "Great news Sid. Dave's awake."

Sid put down his Gameboy. "Can we go t' see him?" he asked sounding relieved and excited as he walked over to the three.

Pon nodded.

"I'll gor get me 'at," said Sid and rushed to the bedroom to get his baseball hat. Not wanting Dave to see they had shaved his head, as he would have extracted the urine (taken the piss)

Spock and Stu smiled.

“Well, at least that is one bit of good news for the poor kid,” said Stu. “Hopefully, Dave can take his mind off what happened to his family.”

Pon nodded and sounding wistful said. “Yes, and perhaps he can give us some answers.”

— Chapter Four —

Dave, although feeling exhausted and confused, sat up in bed when Pon, Stu, Spock, and Sid came in.

Stu and Spock noticed Dave looked to be around their age.

“Ay-up our kid,” said Dave smiling at Sid.

Sid, weeping with relief, rushed over, and getting on the bed, hugged him.

Dave felt Sid’s little body trembling as he clung on to him.

Spock, Stu, and Pon went over to Dave.

“He doesn’t look like a Yorkie,” Spock whispered.

“No mate, I don’t think Asian Yorkies wore flat caps and wellies,” Stu replied and chuckled.

Pon smiled at Dave. “Hello Dave, how are you feeling?”

Dave, still holding Sid, smiled at the three, and sounded weak, said. “I still feel groggy, but better than I did. Thanks for looking after Sid, Pon.”

Dave then looked at Spock and Stu giggling after hearing him reply in Thai but with a Yorkshire accent.

“Dave, these are my English friends, Stu and Spock,” said Pon.

Dave nodded and said, “Ay-up lads, nice to meet you, where are you from?”

“Cleethorpes,” said Stu smirking.

Dave chuckled. “Eeh, bloody Meggies...I’m reet glad you’re here,” he said, although after reading Spock’s tattoo, he furrowed his brow and looked at the pair.

Vitchae came in the room, wai-ed the party and went over with a glass of mud-coloured liquid, which he told Dave to drink.

Dave thanked Vitchae and grimaced as he drank the potion, and said, “I don’t know how to thank you all.”

He looked at Pon, “I want to tell you what happened,” he said in English and looked at the tearful Sid, “but now is not the time.”

Pon nodded his agreement as Vitchae said something to Dave, and Pon translated for Spock and Stu, who sniggered.

“He should be used to that being a Comfort,” said Stu smirking.

Dave looked at the tittering Meggies and while he spoke to Sid, Pon asked. “What does Meggies mean?”

“That’s what the Comforts call people from Cleethorpes,” said Spock smirking.

“So, what does Comfort mean?” Pon asked looking confused.

Stu explained. “When people from Yorkshire come to Cleethorpes for holidays, they always say we’ve Come-for-t-day, so we call them Comforts...get it? Comfort - day.”

Pon smiled and nodded, although not understanding his dopey friend.

Sid then got off Dave’s bed looking upset.

“It’s okay Sid you can stay with me, but you need to wait outside until Vitchae’s finished, and then he will bring you back in here,” said Dave slurring his words as the potent narcotic properties of the healing medicine took effect, and Vitchae took Sid outside.

Dave, feeling drowsy, beckoned Pon closer, and whispered something in his ear. Pon looked surprised and

then frowned.

Several minutes later, Vitichae came back into the room with a tube attached to a bottle of the same mud-coloured solution.

Dave looked drowsy as he tried to speak to the three but he kept nodding off.

“That’ll wake the bugger up,” said Stu and chortled before seeing Pon’s bemused expression.

“What’s up mate?” he asked, “you look like you’ve seen a ghost... What did Dave say?”

Pon trusted Stu and Spock like brothers, so knew what he was about to tell them would go no farther.

Vitichae, about to stick the tube up Dave’s jaxy, stopped when he saw the worried expression on Pon’s face.

Pon looked afraid and with a quake in his voice told Vitichae in Thai and then Spock and Stu in English. “Dave confirmed my suspicions. He told me that Demons attacked the family.”

Vitichae gasped and looked shocked. Both he and Pon now knew who attacked the descendants, but it seemed unbelievable after so many centuries.

Stu and Spock, unable to understand, just thought it was a Yorkie rambling on with a tube about to be stuck up his arse, and they looked at one another.

Pon, seeing the lads looking confused, said. “When we finished here, we can go to my study and I will explain.”

The three left the room and sat outside with Sid while Dave got his medicinal enema.

Vitichae then came out and told Sid that Dave was asleep but he could stay at his bedside until he woke.

With Spock and Stu whistling the Ghostbusters theme, they left the clinic and went to Pons study.

Spock and Stu sat by a large teak desk, while Pon went to a safe and removed a large ancient leather-bound book. He brought it to his desk, put it in front of Spock and Stu, and sat next to them.

Looking intrigued, Spock asked. “What’s that, a door stop?”

Stu pointed at the book and asked, “Are they the mantra thingmy’s that you chant all day and the Buddha’s words of wisdom that you lot lived by?”

Pon shook his head and said, “No, this is the holy Puravuttanta. It gives the events of Buddha’s life, along with his descendants throughout the ages. Buddha’s disciples started this many years after his death.” Pon stared at the book and told them, “and few people knew it existed.”

Spock smirked and looked at Stu. “So, it is centuries old and still not a best seller. Looks like there’s hope for Woneater.”

Pon, ignoring Spock, opened the stiff pages of the ancient book.

Spock and Stu saw the yellow pages of parchment written in squiggles as they waited for Pon to find what he was looking for and translate.

Meanwhile, Stu picked up a newspaper lying on Pon’s desk, but seeing that it was in Thai, and after seeing a gruesome car crash photograph on the front page, he put it down and picked his nose.

“Ah, here we are,” said Pon finding the relevant section. “This was transcribed from the Pali text into ancient Siamese by my ancestors over 1500 years ago.”

“Great,” said Spock and Stu, who yawned as Pon looked down the page. “Ahh, here it is.”

Spock and Stu leant over and looked as Pon pointed to a row of squiggles and said, “The ancients called them Amanussas, which in English translated to Demons.”

Pon read on and told them. “As the years passed and Buddhism spread; other religions became afraid of

the new religion sweeping across their lands. Some had heard the stories about Buddha's living descendants, and two-hundred years after the Buddha's death, the powerful *Hindu King, Brahma of the Madhada region clan, commissioned a sect of assassins, known as the Amanussas, or Demons, to find and eradicate all trace of Buddha's descendants." Pon turned the page and read. "The Amanussas found and killed some descendants and their Gopetu's in Nepal and India." Pon looked at Spock and Stu and read on. "It was said that the Amanussas were invisible."

Pon read and although he had been told stories from the Puravuttanta countless times, but knew if he had just told Spock and Stu the story they wouldn't believe him and knew what their reaction would be. He smiled when he saw the pair appearing to be soaking in the information and groaned when Spock broke the silence with what Pon had expected. "What a load of old bollox... Invisible Demons. Were Buddha's descendants bonkers... Or Yorkie's?" Spock sniggered, looking at Pon as if he had grown another tail.

Pon sighed, and knowing his plan to read from the book had failed, leant forward, and said. "Over two millennia ago, a plant was discovered called Tusen. Garments made from Tusen made the wearer invisible to humans. The plant grew near a village at the base of what is now called the Himalayas."

Spock looked confused. "Hang on matey; if it's invisible, how did they find it?"

Pon tapped on a charcoal sketch in the book and said. "One day, one of the village clan's elders went to the home of one of its blind citizens. The man was sitting outside his shack on a rock. The elder noticed blind man seemed to be moulding something, but the elder saw nothing in his hands. He watched the man for several moments who appeared to be caressing something while smiling. The elder, assuming the blind man crazy, walked away. The blind man, on hearing the elder, stopped what he was doing and asked. "Who's there?"

"It's Ardu," replied the elder.

The old blind man smiled, held out his cupped hands, and said, "I would love a Chuba made from this, it feels so soft. Do you know if the local weavers use this material? I imagine they do with it growing so close."

"I don't know," said the elder," and humouring the blind man, said, "I will ask."

The blind man stood. "I can supply my own, and I know where there is plenty. Here take this clump... Do you know what it's called?"

The blind man nodded, motioning for Ardu the elder to take something and held out his cupped hands. The elder, to pacify the nutcase, went to take the imaginary object and felt something soft and malleable in the old man's hands. He gasped when he touched the large soft object and pulled off clumps and reintegrated them into the ball. It felt like a large ball of yak's wool.

"Do you want to take more? I have lots inside," asked Tusen, the blind man.

The elder had the village weaver and tailor make a Chuba, a long woollen coat, for Tusen, which he wore around the village, although unaware why people laughed at him as they could only see his head, hands, and feet. The village elders gave Tusen the task of collecting the plant and, over the next few months, the village weavers, and tailors made garments from the Tusen.

"So how could the weavers and tailors see it?" asked Stu furrowing his brow.

Pon sighed, wondering if his two friends were this annoying with their teacher's at school.

"Oh, I guess they just felt it," said Stu seeing Pon looking frustrated, "okay, carry on."

Pon cleared his throat and said.

"The warriors in the clan then had the material made into full body suits, which enabled them to raid nearby clan's supplies unseen."

"That's a lot of explaining for such a small section," said Spock looking at the small paragraph of squiggles in the book, and seeing Pon no longer reading it, furrowed his brow and said. "You're making it

up.”

“I am telling you the tale how I was told as a novice monk. It will be a simpler version for you to understand,” said Pon noticing the pair looked bored.

“Hurry up then and no more bloody ad-libbing,” said Stu. Pon grinned and to keep the lads happy, read from the pages... and ad-libbed.

“Every clan feared other clans, so after King Brahma of the large Madhada clan found out about these rumoured spectres, he employed the village warriors as assassins. The clansmen’s fearful supernatural reputation spread throughout the region and they became known as the Amanussa.

According to the texts, King Brahma ordered the Amanussa to kill the Buddha’s descendants. At the time, there were only a few hundred descendants, who lived close to each other.

It was written, that after the first descendants were slaughtered by the Demons, instead of fleeing, the remaining descendants and Gopetu’s congregated together in a small village within a forest to defend themselves. Although terrified, they prayed that Buddha would protect them.”

Pon smiled after reciting the story from memory.

“So what happened next?” asked Stu looking at his watch.

“The Amanussa did not realise that Tusen only appeared invisible to humans, and after locating the descendant’s village, they attacked at night. The village dogs growling and barking alerted the Gopetu’s. With the camp located deep within a dense forest, they used evergreen tree wood for their fires. The thick white smoke billowing from the fires made the assassin’s outlines visible. The Gopetu’s, fiercely trained warriors, easily defeated the surprised Amanussas.”

“Hurray,” said Spock, hoping the story was over and he looked at Pon who said.

“The Gopetu’s tortured the captured Amanussas and found the whereabouts of their village. Using Tusen suits they’d taken of the dead Amanussa, the Gopetu’s attacked the village and wiped them out. Their dogs then led them to the fields of Tusen which they burnt.” Pon smiled and told them. “None has ever been found since.”

“Of course it hasn’t, it’s bloody invisible,” said Stu smirking and tapping his lips together wanting a beer.

Pon, looking at the doubting Thomas’s, said. “I don’t think it was invisible. Perhaps it was a colour that humans cannot see.”

“Oh, so what colour is that then?” asked Spock also wanting a beer.

“Is it blue?” asked Stu looking wistful.

“I don’t know,” said Pon, raising his eyebrows. “But I imagine it’s like infra-red; humans can’t see it, but it exists.”

“So it’s red then?” asked Spock smirking.

Pon groaned and sighed.

“Huh, you’ve been watching too much Discovery Channel,” said Stu grinning.

“What a load of old bollox,” said Spock, who along with Stu, burst out laughing.

With Spock and Stu’s tittering ringing in his ears, Pon took the Puravuttanta and returned it to the safe. He had heard the tale of the Amanussas and the Tusen, and enjoyed it as a young novice monk. However, now that he had told the fable to Spock and Stu, he could see how ridiculous it sounded. He went back to the desk and said. “I need to learn more information from Dave before I go to Salaburi and prepare the Tinju.”

Spock chuckled and looked at Stu. “There you go mate, now you have the invisible Guppy Ghostbusters for your epic.”

Stu glared at Spock and then told Pon. “Poor old Dave looked out of it and I don’t think a tube shoved up his arse will make him very responsive.”

Pon nodded. “I know, but Master Vitichae will tell me when he is well enough for another visit.”

“Right then,” said Spock looking at his watch and hoping the fridge was re-stocked with Singha, “beer time.”

Several hours later, Pon went to see Spock and Stu in the lounge and said. “Master Vitichae called me, Dave’s awake, and more alert; he wanted to see us.” He looked around the room and asked, “Where are the girls?”

“Shopping,” grumbled Stu, “Kim took them to the market to buy clothes... More bloody expense.”

“Yeah,” said Spock chuckling. “It’s not like their clothes are threadbare. They own a bloody clothes shop.”

The three walked to the clinic and into Dave’s room.

Dave sat up against a pillow looking at his iPad while Sid slept in a comfortable chair at his bedside.

Vitichae stood at the table at the foot of Dave’s bed, mixing potions.

Vitichae wai-ed the party and Pon and the lads returned the wai and went over to Daves bedside and he put the iPad on his bedside cabinet.

“How are you feeling?” asked Pon in a whisper, so not to disturb Sid.

“A lot better,” said Dave and smiled, “thanks to Master Vitichae’s potions.”

Vitichae went to stand with Stu, Pon, and Spock.

“Hi Meggies,” said Dave, smiling at Spock and Stu.

“Can you tell us what happened?” asked Pon.

Dave looked at the sleeping Sid and quietly said,

“I don’t rightly know. I wez watching the footie when Kai, Sid’s dad, phoned sounding frantic. I heard Whippet, their Rottweiler, going berserk in the background. I only live next door so I rushed around.” Dave again looked at Sid sleeping as tears welled up in his eyes, “When I got there the door wez open and the place wez a madhouse. Kai looked frantic, swinging his fists around in mid-air. His missus, Noi, stood in the middle of the room screaming and Whippet appeared to be tugging at something and snarling.” Dave took a sip of water, “I didn’t know what the fuck wez happening until Kai saw me and shouted, Demons!”

Dave, looking remorseful, sighed and said, “I wasn’t prepared, even with all my training and preparation, I felt helpless.” He raised his eyebrows. “Who would think this could happen nowadays?”

Dave then looked sullen and shook his head.

“So what happened next?” asked Pon, seeing the Gopetu becoming more upset as he gazed at Sid with tears running down his face.

Dave sniffed back the tears. “Sorry,” he said and composed himself. “Then I saw a flash of a dagger before it scratched me arm.”

He showed them the scratch on his forearm. “I then knew what Kai meant. Me Dad had told Kai and me the stories when we were kids, and I have read the Puravuttanta many times. Dad trained us, although me and Kai laughed about it and never took it seriously,” he said, his voice sounding hoarse. “I consider myself and Kai great fighters, but I wish I had paid more attention to details about how to fight the Demons. They overwhelmed us in minutes.”

Dave rubbed his temples and said, “I only saw a dagger for a moment before it disappeared, so I kicked in that direction and hit someone. When I heard a man groaning, I knew roughly where his throat was and

about to grab it when I heard Whippet yelp, and I saw a dagger slitting his throat. Kai then hollered and fell to his knees and I saw blood spurting from his leg. Noi gasped, and I saw blood spreading on her shirtsleeve, so knew that she'd been stabbed in t' arm."

Pon and Vitthae looked at one another as Dave rubbed his eyes and continued to recall events.

"Someone brushed past me before I heard the front door slam. Everything then went quiet, and we stared at each other and realised they had gone. Kai and Noi said they felt dizzy, so sat down. Noi told me that she had made Sid hide in the attic. Although none of us could understand what wez happening, we figured that they could come back to get Sid and finish us off. I tried to call me dad but his phone wey off, so was Kai's Mams. They always hung around together after Sid's granddad died a few years ago, so they never turned their phones off." Dave's eyes again filled with tears. "Kai's body swelled up and he said that he could feel his throat tightening, so did Noi. I felt fine, so we decided that the best thing to do until we could find answers for what had happened, was for me to take Sid and hide somewhere safe. I hid Whippet's body behind the settee, while Noi went to get Sid. I could see Kai becoming weaker and weaker, and when Noi brought Sid down, although she tried to appear brave for Sid, she collapsed into a chair. Kai seemed to muster his last ounce of his energy, and ordered the frightened Sid to go with me."

Dave looked at Sid sleeping peacefully in the chair clutching his Gameboy.

"I can't imagine how scared or confused the poor little mite must feel?" Spock whispered to Stu.

Stu nodded but looking puzzled said. "I can't see how a wound in the leg or arm would make someone swell up so quickly."

Dave again looked at his scratch. "Neither do I, but from my scratch, I know it was some kind of poison."

Pon nodded. "They used Aroona root poison on Dave, but from the way he described what happened to Sid's parents, I don't think it was the same."

Stu looked puzzled. "So, if these Demons stabbed Sid's Mam and Dad with the stuff that made them swell, why did they only scratch you with the root poison?"

"I dorn know, but we weren't going to wait around to find out. Our priority was to get Sid to safety," said Dave sounding anxious and scared.

Spock furrowed his brow. "So how do you know that yours and Sid's parents are dead?" asked Stu.

Dave sighed, looked again as Sid slept and then handed Pon his iPad.

Stu, Pon, Spock, and Vitthae looked at the screen, showing the recent headlines from the Sheffield Argus newspaper. It showed a burnt-out house, with the headline.

'Gas explosion in Rochester Road kills family.'

"That's Sid's house." Dave told them.

They all looked aghast as they read the headline and Dave took back the iPad and brought up another article showing a car wreckage in front of a rubbish skip. "That's me Dad's car," he said handing the iPad to Pon who showed Stu, Spock, and Vitthae.

They read the article about how the vehicle had ploughed into a waste skip, killing three elderly passengers instantly.

They could all see from the pictures that nobody could have survived.

Dave frowned and through grated teeth said.

"They came back and finished the job, t' bastards. They made it look like accidents. Me dad hardly ever drove that car; it was knackered, and hardly ever started."

Stu, noticing Dave becoming more upset and angry and still feeling puzzled asked. "So what are Buddha's descendants doing in Sheffield, and how come you brought Sid to Thailand?"

Dave took a sip of water, and grinned. "I don't know if you noticed, but if you look underneath me flat cap, I am Thai," said Dave. "My grandparents and Sid's Great grandparents moved to England from Bangkok in the fifties. Me dad taught me and Kai, Muay Thai, and other fighting techniques from when we were youngsters and told us we must learn them. We have always spoken Thai as a family. I could speak that before I learned English, so can Sid. It wasn't until I wey sixteen that our parents told us what our role in life were and Kai was a descendant of Buddha. They said it wey my job to protect him and his family and to learn from the Puravuttanta.

My Dad brought me and Sid's Mam and Dad to Thailand before Sid wez born and I met Pon and the Tinju in Salaburi. Even though our closest Sanctuary is the Fuego de Dios in Spain, I always considered Thailand me horm, so when the bastards attacked, we all knew here was the only place to come to be safe."

Pon nodded and said. "We have been friends ever since."

"Aye, and the Tinju couldn't have a braver or tougher Prime Master. Me and Sid are in good hands," said Dave leaning forward and wai-ing Pon.

Dave then winced as his body still felt sore and weak from the effects of the poison.

"Keep still," said Vitchae as Dave lay back against the pillow. "You have not yet fully recovered."

Dave dozed for a moment before opening his eyes and with his mouth feeling dry, looked at Pon.

"Please look after Sid. He is too young and knew nothing about all this."

Dave looked drowsy, and with his speech slurring, said, "I'm sorry, but I feel sleepy again, can we talk later?" Then he looked at Sid, and asked, "Please don't tell him what happened to his Mam and Dad yet. I told him we were coming here because they were robbed and had to go to hospital. I told him they didn't want him staying alone in case the burglars came back."

Dave swallowed hard. "I will tell him when I feel better."

"Don't worry mate," said Stu looking upset, "we won't say a word to him about this."

"No, and I don't envy you having to tell him about his family being killed, the poor little mite," said Spock frowning and looking angry. "I'd like to get my hands on the bastards."

"Thanks lads," said Dave and closed his eyes.

Pon and Vitchae glanced at each other at intervals throughout Dave's account of the events. With Dave now asleep, Vitchae said. "Prime Master, I will tell Master Cenat in Salaburi and put the Imperial Palace Tinju on high alert. I will have dogs brought from the Bangkok police dog pound and post them around the Palace grounds."

Pon wai-ed Vitchae. "Thank you Master Vitchae. We will take Sid to the quarters and I will show Stu and Spock more about what we could be dealing with."

Vitchae wai-ed and left the room while Pon told Spock and Stu what Vitchae said.

"We will take Sid to the quarters," said Pon. "It's late and we can get him settled."

Spock nodded and picked up the sleeping Sid, along with his Gameboy. Sid stirred, looked at Spock, smiled, and nodded off again.

They walked the short distance to the quarters and Spock handed Sid to Dao, who carried the sleeping little boy to the bedroom. Putting him into the bed, she tucked him in and put his Gameboy on the pillow beside him. Sid woke, smiled at Dao, and hugged his Gameboy, before falling back asleep. Dao showered, ate, and went to bed.

Spock and Stu walked to Pon's study and Stu went to his fridge, smiled, took out six cold cans of beer, and the three sat around the desk.

Spock furrowed his brow and asked. “Do you think these Demon gadgety’s have re-emerged after two millennia to finish the job and kill Buddha’s descendants?”

Pon frowned and said, “I don’t know Spock.” He picked up the newspapers on his desk that Stu had glanced at earlier, and said. “As I said before, none of the descendants or Gopetu’s living in Thailand have contacted me here, nor the Tinju in Salaburi.” He tapped the gruesome front cover photo of a car wreck with bloodied bodies barely recognisable as human beings amongst the twisted metal. and said. “That’s proof that some of our descendants and Gopetu’s are dead.”

Spock and Stu with eyes-wide and mouths agog looked at the photographs.

“A car wreck, the same thing that happened to Dave’s parents in England,” said Pon looking pensive, “I believe this is a global event, although I have not yet spoken to other Sanctuaries,” Pon sighed. “The problem is that most Sanctuaries around the world are like the Tinju before and cut off from the outside world with no communication.”

“So who and where are these Sanctuaries?” asked Stu sitting back in his chair.

While he and Spock drank their beer, Pon shook his head and looked concerned as he told them.

“After the first attack on the descendant’s millennia ago, the Gopetu’s recruited the services of Monasteries of devout Buddhists to become Sanctuaries. Some of these holy orders comprised of warrior monks and, like the Tinju, used their fighting skills to defend their religion. The Sanctuaries edicts, along with learning the teachings of Buddha, were to assist the Gopetu’s if called upon to protect descendants. As Buddhism spread and the descendants spread out around the world, more Sanctuaries were appointed. First, it was the Tibetan Sonhus, then the Indian Khaskinka, followed by the Shaolin in China, the Japanese Samurai, and then over a millennia ago, the Tinju.

There have been many additions over the centuries; the last one being the Warlords of Peace in the USA, which were formed several decades ago.

There are now 42 Sanctuaries around the globe. All are listed in the Puravuttanta with each one having a copy which they update on the descendant’s and Gopetu’s in their area.” Pon pointed to the safe. Nowadays, it is simple to keep the Puravuttanta updated with the changes. Although it is difficult for the remote Sanctuaries, but when something changes, whoever is in charge gets word to one of their Gopetu’s who let the other Sanctuaries know.

“Huh,” said Spock mumbling, “Bloody typical of the Yanks to give themselves a cool name,” he frowned, “They sounded more like a street gang than a holy order of Buddhists.”

“Yeah, and it is an oxymoron. How can you be a Warlord of Peace?” asked Stu sounding like Bamber Gascoigne.

Pon, taken aback, looked at Stu looking smug.

Spock chuckled, saw the surprised look on Pons face, and said, “Don’t ask... he’s an author now, so knows big words.”

Pon, impressed by Stu’s useless literary trivia, took a swig of beer and, looking despondent, said, “Whoever planned this did it with extraordinary precision and knew a lot of information about descendants.”

“Yeah, and who would have a reason to attack your lot... it’s not like you are terrorists. A Buddhist wouldn’t hurt a fly,” said Spock looking mystified.

Pon shook his head and sighed. “I have no idea.”

“I suppose the other big question was... why now?” said Stu, “and who would have the power and wealth to commit such an atrocity?”

“Yeah,” said Spock after taking another gulp of beer, “they would need a quid or two to fund this and I can’t see the training being short... unless,” he said and pondered, “they were already trained.”

Pon and Stu looked at Spock looking contemplative before he belched and said. "Although I still think that invisible suit nonsense sounded a load of old bollox."

"Mind you," said Stu, "With modern technology, maybe there was something secretly developed... who knows.... Oh!"

Pon and Spock glanced at Stu now looking deep in thought. Silence lingered in the room for several minutes until Spock asked.

"What are you grinning about, buggerlugs?"

Stu looked at Pon and said. "Who had loads of dosh and held a grudge against us?"

Pon shrugged.

Stu waved a finger in the air and with a tinge of excitement in his voice, said. "And who planned a precision operation against us before? "

Pon looked at Stu and again shrugged.

Stu smiled and said. "That Ab dab... Sheik, Mohammed Del Whatshisface."

Pon rubbed his face, furrowed his brow, and said, "But he's dead. We saw him die."

"Yes, he is... but his cronies aren't," said Stu smirking, "and Grimes was from the UK, so he could have traced Dave to get revenge."

Pon thought, smiled, picked up his phone, and called Thran in Vietnam.

"Well done matey," said Spock, handing Stu another can.

Stu smirked, opened the beer, took a slurp, and said.

"Problem solved. We can search for Grimes and his cronies, and when we find him, I can give him another fisting." Stu smiled as he spat on his clenched fist, relishing the thought of pummelling the slimy English toff again.

Pon looked disappointed when he hung up the phone and sighed. "It's not Grimes," he said. "Thran told me that he and the others are still in a Vietnamese jail. He said that they have had no contact with the outside world for several years."

Stu pondered and said. "Well, if it isn't them; what about the Sheiks family? Maybe he had relatives as rich and as nasty as him. Perhaps he has an evil son who inherited his wealth?"

"Hmm, that's a possibility I suppose," said Pon and looked at his watch.

"It's getting late. I need to make some phone calls and do more research on the Sheik. Why don't you go to the quarters? I could be quite some time, so I will see you in the morning."

Spock and Stu walked the short distance back to the quarters carrying the stash of Singha beer cans that Spock raided from Pon's office fridge.

Seeing that the girls had gone to bed, Spock and Stu sat in the kitchen.

"I'll pop up and check on Sid," said Spock with a mischievous grin.

Stu took a swig of beer and thought how to work this story into his book. He tried to come up with an inventive name for the novel, but couldn't find any inspiration. "Hmm, I will see if I can find any ideas on the internet," he said aloud and turned on his laptop.

Spock returned a few minutes later.

"Is Sid okay?" asked Stu, impressed with his friend's seemingly newfound parenting skills.

"What? Oh yeah, he is sound asleep in your room with Dao," said Spock smirking.

Stu furrowed his brow and asked, "What have you got there?"

Spock grinned, sat down, and turned on Sid's Gameboy.

"Huh," said Stu glaring at Spock as he logged onto the internet.

— Chapter Five —

“Mohammed Del Alaz had three wives and eight children,” said Pon coming into the Kitchen carrying a folder and looking excited. He sat down at the table and asked, “Where’s Sid?”

“In the lounge with Dao, playing with his Gameboy,” said Spock looking disappointed while Stu smirked.

“Do you want breakfast Pon?” asked Moo, placing a glass of cold water in front of the tired looking Prime Master.

“No thanks Moo, I’ve already eaten,” he said and looked at Moo, who, realising that he had something important to discuss with Spock and Stu, joined Dao and Sid in the lounge.

“You look knackered mate,” said Stu as Pon opened the folder.

Pon nodded. “I’ve been up all night, but you might be onto something Stu.”

Stu and Spock drank their tea while Pon took a scanned photo from the folder and placed it on the table.

Spock frowned. “It’s that bloody Sheik Mohammed Del Numbnuts, the one who caused us all that grief,” said Spock, who then looked confused, “but he’s dead.”

“He is,” said Pon and told them, “It’s not Mohammed, it is his eldest son, Sheik Fahed Del Alaz. He was the main benefactor of his father’s fortune.”

Pon took out other documents and said. “According to what I found out, Fahed, like his father, was rumoured to be linked to funding terror groups.”

“That’s it then,” said Stu tapping on the image, “he’s your culprit.”

Pon furrowed his brow. “Perhaps Stu, but something puzzled me. Why attack Dave and the descendants in the UK?”

Stu rubbed his chin and said. “Well, if the son of whatshisface was looking to get some kind of revenge on us for his dad, then Spock and I were in the newspapers along with you. Maybe this Fahed character got hold of a Thai newspaper and with all the Ab-dabs living in the UK, it wouldn’t be difficult to target Dave and the others.”

Pon shook his head. “Yes, but how did he know about the descendants? That information’s only in the Puravuttanta and they are only given to descendants, Gopetu’s, and Sanctuaries,” said Pon looking pensive.

Stu looked up from his laptop, “Well there’s nothing about Fahed on the web and he isn’t on Facebook.

Pon sighed, “I know, I found nothing on there about him either.”

Spock frowned. “Have you tried to contact any of the other Sanctuaries, to find out if anything’s happened to their descendants?”

Pon smirked and said. “Yes Spock, all their GPS coordinates and phone numbers are in the Puravuttanta.”

“Really,” said Spock raising his eyebrows looking excited.

Pon and Stu chuckled.

“Yeah, very funny,” said Spock frowning.

“Only the Sanctuaries name, country, and a rough description of the locations are listed in the Puravuttanta, so finding them all could take years. Most are secluded Monasteries, similar to how the Tinju were. I have only met the Prime Master from one other Sanctuary, but when I called him his phone was off.”

Spock smirked. “Can’t you just look in the yellow pages?”

Stu slapped his forehead and groaned.

“What!” said Spock looking indignant. “Pon and other monks here have phones, so maybe they all do. I bet the yank monks have them.”

Stu frowned. “Yeah, but how will it be listed? Secret Septic Sanctuary - address: middle of nowhere?”

Pon nodded and said. “I have looked at satellite images from Google Earth before to find the American Sanctuaries Monastery. The area described in the Puravuttanta was immense and I saw no trace of anything in the snowy wilderness.”

Stu looked puzzled and sighed. “Well, if it was Fahed behind it then what has he to gain? We had nothing to do with his father’s death.”

“Huh,” mumbled Spock, “if he’s as bonkers as his old man, he probably blamed us for killing his nutty dad. He probably thought if he killed off a few Buddhists, Allah will give him an extra few virgins when he popped his clogs.”

Pon, sounding concerned, said, “If it was Fahed, then how has he found out about the Puravuttanta? There aren’t any descendants in the Middle- East.”

Spock shrugged. “Unless his crazy dad had a copy. He seemed to have a lot of other crap and on TV it said he collected artefacts from other religions.”

Pon looked again at the image of Fahed. He had also considered that possibility and knew that although they reported Mohammed’s plundered treasures were returned to their rightful owners or put in museums, he realised a copy could be somewhere.

“Do you know where Fahed is now?” asked Stu interrupting his thoughts and still convinced that he was on the right track.

Pon looked at his papers and nodded. “As far as I know he is in Saudi Arabia, he lives with his family in his Fathers Palatial house.” Pon took another scanned photo from his folder and laid it on the table.

“Sorry Sherlock, it looks like your mad Ab-dab theory is blown to pieces,” chuckled Spock when he saw a smiling Fahed with his wives and children dressed in Western clothing. “Apart from his harem, he looked like a normal family man,” said Spock smirking.

Stu furrowed his brow and looked at Spock. “Huh, that proves nothing, a wolf in sheep’s clothing, it must still be him... who else could it be? Come on Einstein; let’s hear your list of suspects.”

Spock, still chuckling said. “Well... Now I know there’s no evidence yet, but it sounds to me like Woneater could be a Buddhist bloodsucker.”

Sid then walked into the kitchen. “What’s so funny? Oh, Ay-up Pon, I never heard you come in.”

“No, too busy playing on your Gameboy,” grumbled Spock, still miffed about how Sid had found the Gameboy after he had hidden it.

Sid glared at Spock, went to the fridge, took out a coke, and asked. “Can we go see Dave? I want to find out when we can go horm.”

Pon nodded, smiled, and said. “Yes Sid, we can go to the clinic and see Dave.”

Sid smiled and went back into the lounge.

Stu looked at Spock looking miserable and smirked. “Well Spock, Pon told you his name meant, ‘he who has found meaning.’ Perhaps the meaning is a Gameboy, he found that easy enough,” he sniggered.

Spock grunted, having thought hiding it in the fridge would be safe, which it would have been if he and Stu hadn’t drunk most of the contents.

Pon, sounding sullen, leant forward and asked. “How is he?”

Stu sighed and said. “He’s okay, but slept a lot, which is to be expected after what he’s been through.”

Spock, his mind now on their problem and thinking about the Puravuttanta story, said. “The invisible clothes bollox I am still finding it hard to believe, but whoever is behind this must have one of your old books and using that against you and the Buddhists.”

Pon sighed and nodded.

“Invisibility is possible,” said Stu looking smug.

Spock and Pon looked at Stu and furrowed their brows as Stu said. “Last night while Spock played with Sid’s Gameboy, I researched about it on the web.”

Spock groaned, got up, took his and Stu’s empty mug, and went to the hot water jug while Professor Stu explained. “It is feasible that there are things in nature beyond our *visual spectrum. Take red for example; under water red below 10 metres is murky and colourless, and the deeper you go other colours appear the same. Scientists proved that red fish are invisible to predators and,” he said waving a finger, “look at jellyfish and how hard they are to see, they are transparent and we can see right through them.”

Stu then smiled and said. “We have not discovered all the places that exist on our planet, nor have we discovered every creature or plant life. New discoveries are made all the time, so who can say that animals and plants don’t exist on the planet that we can’t see?”

“Yes smartarse, but as you say, red might be colourless underwater, and you can see through jellyfish, but you can still see something. Dave said he saw nothing but daggers,” said Spock bringing over three hot mugs of tea.

Stu took a sip of tea and said, “Yes, I know, but that was just one example of how things can change our visual perspective.” Stu leant forward. “What I am saying is; maybe we can’t see everything.”

Pon listened with interest at Stu’s hypothesis, while Spock looked unconvinced and smiled. “We can see beer and that’s the important thing.”

Stu frowned, and perturbed by his friend being unimpressed by his research, smirked, and said. “Okay buggerlugs, so what colour is the wind?”

Spock furrowed his brow as he considered Stu’s argument for a millisecond. He smiled, leant sideways, and let rip.

Spock chuckled as Pon and Stu grimaced, and he said. “I don’t know about the colour,” he sniffed his ripe stench, “but you can certainly smell it.”

— Chapter Six —

“Brr, it’s freezing out there,” said Caleb walking into the heated office.

After brushing light flakes of snow off his thick coat and woollen hat, he took them off, hung them on a wall hanger, and said. “Although it is clear blue skies, it must be 20 below.” He looked at the thermometer, “Huh, 22 below.”

Caleb rubbed his shaven head and knocked snow off his boots on the coir mat.

Seeing blood on the mat, he looked at the sole of his boot and groaned. “Urrh,” he said, looking at the brown bloody splodge on the underside of his boot, “I stepped on one of those god damn frogs.”

The large stocky shaven-headed man sitting behind the desk chuckled. “Yeah, there are thousands of them here this time of year. Even though the lake’s frozen, it’s their mating season,” said the man.

Caleb wiped his boot several times on the mat and took his briefcase over to the desk. “You wouldn’t think anything could survive these temperatures,” he said, placing the briefcase on the desk.

“It’s a good job something does,” said the other man, who stood and went over to an interior window. He looked down upon the large factory, where workers wearing thick dark goggles sat at sewing machines. Needles went up and down at a frantic pace and although bobbins on top spun, there was no sign of any thread.

“Phase 1 is complete sir,” said Caleb with his folders now laid on the desk in front of him.

“Excellent Caleb,” said the man while still gazing over the factory. His attention then shifted to another department where struts of massive looms went back and forth but with no material in sight. Workers wearing the same goggles looked like mime artists as they loaded the machines.

The man turned around and looked at Caleb. “Were there any problems?” He asked moving closer to the radiators.

Caleb shook his head and said. “No, nothing serious sir.”

The man frowned. “What do you mean, nothing serious?”

Caleb took a sheet of paper from a folder, handed it to the man, and said. “We killed all the descendants in England as planned, but our English targets went to the Sanctuary in Thailand instead of Spain.”

The man took the sheet of paper and glared at Caleb.

His bosses piercing blue eyes always unnerved Caleb as his voice quivered. “There’s nothing to worry about sir, we know where they are and the suicide squad are on their trail,” he smirked as the now angry looking man read the report and nodded.

The man then looked at the folders on the desk and Caleb tapped the one he had taken the sheet of paper from. “They are the reports on all the other descendants killed in the UK, along with regional newspaper headlines from around the country about how they were killed in accidents. With none of the stories connecting, they never got into the national press,” said Caleb now feeling warmer. “Each folder has similar information from every country with descendants.”

The man again glanced at the sheet with information about Sid and Dave and shrugged. “No matter... I imagine the Sanctuaries are now searching for the culprits?”

Caleb nodded. “Yes sir, I believe so, just as we thought they would.”

“What about our soldiers?” asked the man.

“They have all returned to base and all team leaders reported a complete success, sir,” said Caleb pointing to the files.

The man smiled and walked to a decanter of whisky on a drinks cabinet. He poured himself and Caleb a large glass of single malt, handed one to Caleb, and said, "Well done Caleb, here drink this, it will warm you up."

Caleb took a drink and felt the smooth malt whisky warm him. As he drank the warming amber liquid, he looked at a screen which showed outside, where several people wearing goggles walked in the ankle deep snow and looked like they were picking something off the ground. Although Caleb saw nothing in their hands, he smiled when he saw them appearing to put nothing into large empty looking containers.

"Although the crop here is almost depleted, we have more than enough to complete our task," said the man and finished his whisky and looked at Caleb, who finished his and handed the man the glass.

"Is everything ready for the next phase?" the man asked while refilling the glasses.

Caleb nodded. "Yes sir," he said and took a key ring from his briefcase.

The man handed Caleb his whisky and took the small triangular key fob with a red button. He took a gulp of whisky while he inspected the small device and smiled. "Okay," he said. "I will release the information and leave it a few days before launching phase two." The man then rubbed his shaven head, smiled, and said, "I better get prepared."

Caleb nodded, sculled the whisky, put on his coat and hat, and left the warm office.

Walking outside into the freezing air, he got into a Jeep Cherokee Trailhawk and turned on the engine. While warm air circulated around the cabin, Caleb looked over the frozen rugged terrain and smirked.

END OF SAMPLE

Novels by Robert A Webster

Fiction

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Enjoy the first adventure of Nick, Spock and Stu as they assist in the recovery of the relic and the subsequent voyage of discovery.

Chalice - Siam Storm 2 – A Cambodian Adventure

The discovery of a mysterious corpse leaves law enforcement agencies baffled. This adventure sees the lads join forces with their new friend, Pon, as they once again attempt to recover a holy relic, which has this time stolen for a completely new and sinister reason. The chase takes them into Cambodia, as they thwart plans that could affect the planet and change them into fruit based drinkers.

Bimat - Siam Storm 3-A Vietnamese Adventure

A kidnap and ransom demand lead our hapless heroes into a pursuit through Vietnam. They encounter an old foe, driven by obsession in his revenge driven quest. This time they face many challenges in both their adventure and their personal circumstance and although they almost lose everything, they never lose hope.

Trilogy:

All three Southeast Asia adventures.

Protector – Siam Storm 4-The Final Adventure

The adventure continues in, Protector, the fourth book of the Siam Storm Series.

When descendants of Siddhartha Gautama arrive at the Royal Palace in Bangkok, it is Prime Master Pon's duty to discover who is responsible for the murder of the other descendants, along with their age-old protectors.

After capturing an assassin, Pon assembles a team of combatant monks to track down the leader of a rising savage group of terrorists. The fun begins when Spock and Stu join the team, and as usual, they find trouble. Even with Spock and Stu underfoot, the team uncovers evidence of a plot with worldwide implications.

Protector follows the hazardous journey through unfamiliar terrain as the team races the clock to stop further killings of their brethren, only to discover that things are not always as they seem.

Spice – Culinary Adventure

Ben Bakewell is a master baker with a unique gift that made him the grand master of his culinary craft. More commonly known as 'Cake' he meets up with Ravuth, a Cambodian man residing in England, who has spent the majority of his life trying to trace his long lost family.

Jed Culver is a disgraced D.E.A agent whose bitterness for his old employer and lust for revenge lead him along a deadly path, as he also pursues the plant, although for a far more sinister gain.

This thrilling, but yet sometimes hilarious quest, takes you from the glitz and glamour of the fashionable London restaurant scene, to the wild, untamed tropical forests surrounding the Cardamom mountains region of Southeast Asia, as the participants race to discover the whereabouts of a remarkable plant and locate a misplaced family.

Fossils

Enjoy the hilarious antics of an elderly four piece band as they embark on a whirlwind tour of several countries in Southeast Asia, unaware of their amazing worldwide success. Steve Baker (Strat) Elvin Stanley (Chippers) Charles Clark (Nobby) and Wayne Logan (Sticks) more famously known as ‘Fossils,’ are four musicians from varying background who are inadvertently united and form a band with a unique and exciting sound that filled an auditory hiatus that has been lacking for decades in the modern day music industry. Pursued and hounded by ruthless record producers, this unassuming rock band discover a new, exciting and carefree way of life, which they enjoy to the fullest, or at least what remains of it. Viagra, snuff, and Rock’n’roll.

P.A.T.H – Return Of The Reich

A team of three psychics use their unique talents to provide a link between the mortal world and the celestial. Commissioned by lost souls; they find lost treasures for the troubled sprits, which they give to the mortal beneficiaries. One particular case finds the team caught up in a plot that had been conceived during world war two, which is instigated in the present day. The team has to solve a mystery that threatens to split the delicate fabric joining the two worlds.

NEXT - PATH 2 Covenant Of The Gods

With the fate of humankind resting on their shoulders, the PATH team, along with the mortal Keepers and Guides around the world, are sent on various quests. Each individual test will push them all to their limits as time slowly ticks down towards Armageddon and their destiny.

Ratchet and Stench - Dog Gone Mystery

When Cruft’s Best of Breeds Champion mysteriously disappears; the finger of suspicion points at the owner of a rival kennel.

Somerset police find the missing Scottish terrier’s dermal tracker, but cannot find further evidence of a crime. Having no proof, they are unable to do anything and drop any investigations.

The other dogs call in Ratchet and Stench, and even though they uncover clues that suggest a brutal murder, the animal sleuths aren’t convinced.

NON Fiction

Diabetes Type 2 – Help Safely Lower Your Blood Sugar With The Tree Of Life

Written by Diabetics; for Diabetics.

Diabetes is now a prevalent condition that affects millions of people. Many of you will have, or most of you will know, someone who has it.

This book has been written by a collaboration of medically trained diabetics – not by Medical Practitioners, PhD professors or salespeople. – They are people who until recently struggled to control diabetes with diet, exercise and high levels of glycemc drugs alone. After learning about products made from the Moringa tree, they were able to dramatically lower their blood glucose levels within weeks and continue to do so. They did their research thoroughly and found the pods and leaves of this unique tree dramatically lowered their blood glucose levels quickly, and that continues to be the case. They now want to share their knowledge and extensive research in a simple to understand way, so you too can also benefit from their experience.

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